

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY
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AMEMBASSY LILONGWE PRIORITY
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TAGS: PFOR, RH, ZA
SUBJ: MUGABE AND NKOMO POSITION ON RHODESIAN CONSTITUTIONAL
CONFERENCE AND REJECTION OF DIRECT U.S. PARTICIPATION

SUMMARY: AT A LUSAKA PRESS CONFERENCE AFTERNOON OF APRIL
19, PATRIOTIC FRONT LEADERS NKOMO AND MUGABE REJECTED AMERICAN
PARTICIPATION AS CO-SPONSOR WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM OF A NEW
CONFERENCE DESIGNED TO RESOLVE THE RHODESIAN QUESTION. AT
THE JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE HELD AT STATE HOUSE, THE TWO RHODESIAN
NATIONALIST LEADERS SAID THAT ANY CONFERENCE ON RHODESIA
SHOULD BE BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. HOWEVER,
THE PARTICIPATION OF OTHERS AT THE CONFERENCE
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WAS NOT RULED OUT. END SUMMARY

1. IN A STATEMENT AT THE OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE NKOMO SAID
THAT HE HAD TOLD OWEN THAT THE "GENEVA CONFERENCE IS DEAD"
AND THAT AT IN ANY NEW CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS MUST TALK
THE SAME LANGUAGE UNLIKE AT GENEVA WHERE THE TERMS OF THAT
CONFERENCE WERE NOT DEFINED. NKOMO SAID THAT ANY NEW CONFERENCE

MUST RECOGNIZE THAT THERE IS A WAR SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE. ONCE HAVING RECOGNIZED THIS, BRITAIN WILL RECOGNIZE WHAT THE CRITERION FOR PARTICIPATION IN A NEW CONFERENCE SHOULD BE. NKOMO SAID A NEW CONFERENCE SHOULD ONLY LAST "TWO OR THREE DAYS", THE TIME NEEDED TO AGREE ON THE FRAMEWORK. HOWEVER, HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE DRAFTING OF A CONSTITUTION "MIGHT TAKE SOME TIME." HE INDICATED THAT PRESENT BRITISH THINKING ON A CONFERENCE WAS TOO INVOLVED WITH DETAILS, SUCH AS A MECHANISM FOR ELECTIONS, THE U.K. PARLIAMENTARY TRANSFER OF POWER, GETTING RHODESIAN FINAL APPROVAL AND NUMEROUS OTHER IRRELEVANT PROVISIONS. "WE HAD THAT NONSENSE AT GENEVA," HE SAID, "AND WE WILL NOT HAVE IT AGAIN." "YOU CANNOT EXPECT SMITH TO BE THE VETOER ALL THE TIME."

MUGABE, IN AN UNPREPARED STATEMENT, DEFINED THE PATRIOTIC FRONT POSITION ON THE ROLE OF THE U.S. IN A NEW CONFERENCE. HE BEGAN BY SAYING THAT BRITAIN "TO GET US TO ATTEND A CONFERENCE MUST PROVE THAT SHE HAS THE EFFECTIVE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTING WHATEVER AGREEMENT IS REACHED ON THE TRANSFER OF POWER TO THE MAJORITY." BRITAIN HAS ADMITTED THAT SHE IS "A WEAK POWER," ACCORDING TO MR. MUGABEL, AND "AS A WEAK POWER SHE DOES NOT HAVE THE MEANS TO AFFECT ANY AGREEMENT AND WILL HAVE TO RELAY ON "PRESSURES FROM OTHER SOURCES" SUCH AS THE U.S., THE EEC COUNTRIES, AND THE COMMON WEALTH. BRITAIN, SAID MUGABE "INDICATED TO US THAT SHE HAD HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES, WITH PRESIDENT CARTER, AND THAT THERE IS A PREPAREDNESS ON THE PART OF THE UNITED STATES TO PROVIDE THE MEANS THAT BRITIAN PICKS IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT ANY AGREED SET OF PROPOSALS." MUGABE SAID THE PATRIOTIC FRONT QUERIED DR. OWEN AS TO "THE NATURE OF THE MEANS AND THE MODES OF APPLYING THOSE MEANS." AND WAS TOLD BY UNCLASSIFIED

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DR OWEN THAT "THE U.S. HAD NOT INDICATED WHAT THOSE MEANS ARE." MUGABE SAID THE PF WAS INTERESTED IN KNOWING WHETHER THESE MEANS WOULD INVOLVE MILITARY INTERVENTION OR WERE "MERELY ECONOMICM", BUT WAS TOLD THAT THE U.S. "HAD NOT DEFINED THE MEANS." MUGABE SAID IT WAS AT THAT POINT THAT THE PF "WONDERED WHAT PURPOSE WOULD BE SERVED" IN ATTENDING A CONFERENCE IF BRITAIN HAD NOT EVEN BEEN ABLE TO DEFINE THE CHARACTER OF THE MEANS WHICH WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENT REACHED AT SUCH A CONFERENCE. ACCORDING TO HIM IT WAS AT THAT POINT "IT WAS REVEALED TO US THAT "THE INTENTION REALLY WAS TO GET THE UNITED STATES TO USE WHATEVER MEANS SHE MIGHT DEEM NECESSARY IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES" AND THAT THIS "NECESSITATED THAT THE UNITED STATES MUST BE INVOLVED FROM THE VERY SOURCE. TO USE HIS TERMS, THE UNITED STATES MUST SIT IN THE CONFERENCE, MUST CO-CONVENE THE CONFERENCE, PERHAPS CO-CHAIR IT, AND BE A PARTY TO THE AGREEMENT."

MUGABE SAID THAT THE PF HAS NO OBJECTION TO BRITAIN FALLING BACK ON ANY RESOURCES IT MIGHT HAVE", BUT "WE CERTAINLY DO

OBJECT TO THE INTRUSION OF OTHER POWERS." RESOLVING THE SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE IS "STILL A MATTER BETWEEN OURSELVES AND BRITAIN" AND "WE DO NOT WANT TO SEE THE SITUATION INTERNATIONALIZED." HE SAID THAT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT HAD NO INTENTION OF BRINGING INTO ANY CONFERENCE ITS ADVISORS, THE FRONTLINE STATES, AND FOR THAT REASON DID NOT EXPECT BRITAIN TO DO OTHERWISE. "WE CAN CALL ON ANY ADVISE WE LIKE," SAID MUGABE, "BUT WE CANNOT BRING OTHER POWERS INTO THE ACTUAL DETERMINATION OF THE SOLUTION AND WE HOLD THAT THERE SHOULD BE ONLY TWO PARTIES--OURSELVES AND BRITAIN." LATER IN THE PRESS CONFERENCE MUGABE MADE IT CLEAR THAT IAN SMITH WOULD ONLY BE ACCEPTED "AS AN EXTENSION OF THE BRITISH DELEGATION." NEITHER NKOMO NOR MUGABE REJECTED OUTRIGHT THE INCLUSION OF BISHOP ABEL MUZOREWA OR REV. NDABANINGHI SITHOLE PARTICIPATING IN A NEW CONFERENCE, STATING THAT THIS WAS A BRITISH DECISION. HOWEVER, THEY REPEATEDLY EMPHASIZED THEIR POSITION THAT ANY NEGOTIATION IS ESSENTIALLY TWO-SIDED. NKOMO CHARACTERIZED A FUTURE CONFERENCE

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AS THE "PATRIOTIC FRONT ON ONE SIDE AND BRITAIN AND HER PROTEGES ON THE OTHER."

MUGABE, WHEN ASKED TO CLARIFY HIS POSITION ON THE PROPOSAL THAT THE UNITED STATES CO-CHAIR A CONFERENCE, REPLIED THAT "WE ARE DEFINITELY OPPOSED TO THAT." HE SAID THE PATRIOTIC FRONT HAD NO OBJECTION TO THE UNITED STATES USING "WHATEVER PRESSURES IT WISHED TO USE BEFORE OR AFTER THE PROPOSED CONFERENCE", BUT SAID THE U.S. DOES NOT NEED "A CONFERENCE CONTEXT IN ORDER TO APPLY WHATEVER ECONOMIC PRESSURES THEY CAN APPLY." MUGABE SAID HE SAW NO REASON FOR "DRAGGING PARTIES WHO WERE NOT IN THE DISPUTE INTO THE CONFERENCE AND ADDED THAT IF THIS WERE DONE THERE WOULD BE "NO RIGHT TO KEEP OTHER POWERS FROM COMING IN."

"WE ARE NOT AGAINST THE AMERICANS," SAID MUGABE, NOTING THAT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT HAD HELD MEETING WITH SCHAUFLELE AND REINHARD, AND "WOULD LIKE TO MAKE FRIENDS AS WIDELY AS POSSIBLE, BUT CANNOT HAVE NEW MASTERS IMPOSED ON OUR SITUATION.

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